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ACTION MEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-14 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-07 M-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
ANCONSUL PESHAWAR POUCH
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CINCPAC COR POLAD

E.O. 12065: GDS, 10/26/06 (LRORTON, RONALD D.) OR-P
TAGS: SREF, MOPS, PBOR, PK, AF, UR
SUBJ: (U) HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS STRAFE AFGHAN REFUGEE
CAMP IN PAKISTAN

REF: STATE 288424
1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.
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2. DURING OCTOBER 25 CALL

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REQUESTED TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE CURRENT AFGHAN SITUATION AND BABRAK'S VISIT TO MOSCOW (REPORTED SEPTEL). ENBOFF TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO ASK ABOUT THAT MORNING'S PRESS REPORT THAT SIX AFGHAN HELICOPTERS HAD STRAFED A REFUGEE ENCAMPMENT IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE. [] CONFIRMED THAT THE ATTACK HAD OCCURRED ON OCTOBER 24 AT A UNHCR-RECOGNIZED ENCAMPMENT BETWEEN MIRAN SHAM AND DATTAKHEL (NORTH NAZIRISTAN) ABOUT TEN MILES FROM THE PAK/AFGHAN BORDER. (CITING OFFICIAL SOURCES, THE OCTOBER 25 LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT THE SIX COPTERS ATTACKED THE CAMP AT ABOUT 1545 HOURS THE PREVIOUS DAY. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF ANY DEATHS OR INJURIES, BUT IT WAS SAID THAT THE CAMP HAD BEEN STRAFED "FOR SOME TIME.")

3. [] SAID HE DID NOT HAVE MANY DETAILS AS YET. HE WAS CERTAIN THE COPTERS HAD STRAFED THE CAMP WITH MACHINE GUN FIRE FOR ABOUT TEN TO FIFTEEN MINUTES BUT WAS UNSURE WHETHER ANY ROCKETS OR BOMBS HAD ALSO BEEN EMPLOYED. HE DID NOT RULE OUT THAT THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME INJURIES BUT OPINED THAT HAD THERE BEEN HE WOULD HAVE HAD SOME WORD BY THEN. NAQVI INDICATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SPECIFIC GOP DEFENSE RESPONSE TO THE INCURSION AND THAT THE COPTERS HAD WITHDRAWN OF THEIR OWN ACCORD AFTER THE ATTACK.

4. [] THERE IS NO DOUBT THE ATTACK WAS INTENTIONAL. HE REGARDED IT AS MORE EVIDENCE OF SOVIET "BULLYING" AND SUGGESTED THAT AN "OMINOUS" PATTERN WAS DEVELOPING. NONETHELESS, HE THOUGHT THIS SORT OF ATTACK AS WELL AS THOSE ON THE TWO BORDER POSTS IN LATE
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SEPTEMBER COULD BE HANDLED BY THE PAKISTANI MILITARY.

5. ENBOFF OBSERVED THAT AFTER THE TWO BORDER POST INCIDENTS LAST MONTH THERE HAD BEEN PROMPT OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND PROTESTS HAD BEEN LODGED WITH THE AFGHAN EMBASSY HERE. HE INQUIRED WHETHER THE ABSENCE OF SUCH A STATEMENT OR PROTEST MEANT THAT THE GOP REGARDED THIS LATEST INCIDENT AS SOMEHOW DIFFERENT. [] THAT WAS NOT THE CASE AND NOTED THAT THE STORY OF THE ATTACK HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE PRESS BY "OFFICIAL SOURCES." HE WAS

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UNCERTAIN WHETHER A PROTEST WOULD BE LODGED OR NOT.
6. VISITING PESHAWAR VICE CONSUL COVINGTON, WHO
ACCOMPANIED ENBOFF, ASKED _____ WHETHER THE GOP HAD ANY
PLANS TO MOVE THE REFUGEES FURTHER AWAY FROM THE BORDER
TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER ATTACKS ON CAMPS.
NAQVI SAID THE GOP WOULD LIKE TO DO THAT AND HAS ALWAYS
PREFERRED THAT THE REFUGEES BE AT SOME REMOVE FROM THE
BORDER. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE
DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING AVAILABLE PUBLIC LAND THE FURTHER
ONE GETS FROM THE BORDER AND NOTED THAT THE LOCAL
POPULATION CANNOT ALWAYS BE EXPECTED TO WELCOME A
REFUGEE PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR OWN VILLAGES
AND LANDS. _____ AGREED WITH ENBOFF'S SUGGESTION THAT
THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES MIGHT SEE AN INTEREST IN FORCING
THE REFUGEES TO MOVE FURTHER FROM THE BORDER AND MAY
HOPE TO FRIGHTEN THEM INTO DOING SO WITH ATTACKS SUCH AS
THAT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.

7. COMMENT: AN ATTACK ON AN UNDEFENDED REFUGEE
ENCAMPMENT CLOSE TO THE PAK/AFGHAN BORDER FITS A PATTERN
ANTICIPATED BY MANY WHO HAVE SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET
PRESSURES ON PAKISTAN WOULD BEGIN WITH ATTACKS ON

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TO SECSTATE USMOC NIACI IMMEDIATE 1010
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE
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AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR POUCH
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 10906

ISOLATED BORDER POSTS AND EXPAND TO INCLUDE ATTACKS
ON REFUGEE CAMPS IN AREAS ADJACENT TO REGIONS OF HEAVY
FIGHTING IN AFGHANISTAN (IN THIS CASE PAKTIA). THIS
INCIDENT TOOK PLACE SOME DISTANCE INSIDE PAKISTAN AND
INVOLVED SUSTAINED HOSTILE ACTION AND COULD NOT EASILY
BE EXPLAINED AS UNINTENTIONAL. IT IS RATHER SURPRISING
THAT NO CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

6. THERE COULD BE A NUMBER OF REASONS TO EXPLAIN THE
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MORE CAUTIOUS GOP REACTION TO THIS LATEST ATTACK ON ITS
TERRITORY. SINCE NO PAKISTANI MILITARY POST OR PERSONNEL

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WERE APPARENTLY INVOLVED, THE GOP MAY HAVE FELT LESS COMPELLED TO REACT WITH AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT OR PROTEST. THE GOP MAY ALSO BE SENSITIVE TO THE UNHCR'S INTEREST IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND MAY ALSO HOPE THAT THE UNHCR WILL TAKE THE LEAD IN COMPLAINING TO KABUL OR MOSCOW. THE GOP IS ALSO LIKELY THINKING THROUGH ITS RESPONSE VERY CAREFULLY AS IT FEELS ITSELF UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM MOSCOW.

9. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THERE WILL BE ANY FURTHER GOP REACTION--PUBLIC OR PRIVATE--TO THE OCTOBER 24 ATTACK ON A REFUGEE CAMP. IDENTIFICATION OF AN "OMINOUS" PATTERN MAY INDICATE THE GOP EXPECTS FURTHER INCIDENTS. WE WILL BE WATCHING CLOSELY OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS FOR MORE CLUES AS TO HOW THE GOP IS RESPONDING TO THIS LATEST SIGN OF SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE.

10. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. HUMMEL

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